

Message Text

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TAGS: ELAB, CA
SUBJECT: UAW LEADER'S VIEWS ON NDP

REF: A. 76 OTTAWA 3673, B. 76 OTTAWA 4725

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. UAW CANADIAN V.P. MCDERMOTT, A LONG-TIME SUPPORTER OF NDP, PUBLICLY CALLED FOR RE-EVALUATION BY CLC OF ITS RELATIONSHIP TO NDP AND CRITICIZED PROVINCIAL NDP GOVERNMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE OF WAGE CONTROLS DESPITE LABOR'S EMPHATIC OPPOSITION. CLC'S INTENTION TO BECOME MORE ACTIVE POLITICALLY IS BOUND TO ALTER ITS RELATIONS WITH NDP. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING JANUARY 5 INTERVIEW WITH HIGHLY RESPECTED GLOBE AND MAIL LABOR REPORTER WILFRED LIST, UAW CANADIAN V.P. DENNIS MCDERMOTT FOR FIRST TIME IN PUBLIC SPELLED OUT HIS DISSATISFACTION (SHARED BY OTHER CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS LEADERS) WITH THE NDP'S RELATIONSHIP TO LABOR. HE WAS PARTICULARLY CRITICAL OF ACCEPTANCE BY NDP GOVERNMENTS IN MANITOBA, SASKATCHEWAN AND PREVIOUS NDP GOVERNMENT IN B.C. OF THE FEDERAL WAGE CONTROLS DESPITE ORGANIZED LABOR'S OPPOSITION. MCDERMOTT INSISTED THAT ON
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FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES SUCH AS WAGE CONTROLS A CONSENSUS MUST BE REACHED AND COMMON EFFORTS PURSUED IN ALL LEVELS OF THE PARTY AS IS DONE WITHIN CLC. AS LONGTIME SUPPORTER OF NDP, HE HOPED THAT A SPLIT BETWEEN CLC AND NDP CAN BE AVOIDED BUT DID NOT RULE OUT SUCH EVENTUALITY. ARTICULATING A WIDELY-HELD CLC VIEW, MCDERMOTT STATED: "WE HAVE TO DEFINE OUR RELATIONSHIP

WITH NDP IN TERMS OF COMMON GOALS. WE CAN'T HAVE A SECOND-CLASS RELATIONSHIP UNDER WHICH WE HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF PAYING THE BILLS AND ORGANIZING SUPPORT ONLY TO HAVE OUR FRIENDS TURN THEIR BACKS ON US IN THE CRUNCH".

3. COMMENT: MCDERMOTT'S CRITICISM OF NDP SHOULD BE VIEWED WITHIN CONTEXT OF CLC'S CONVICTION THAT ITS NEWLY ACQUIRED COHESION HAS OPENED UP GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR POLITICAL ACTION. IN THE WAKE OF THE OCTOBER 14 DAY OF PROTEST,CLC HAS INITIATED A REVIEW OF ITS POLITICAL ALTERNATIVES--DIRECT ACTION OR CHANNELING ITS EFFORTS THROUGH A STRENGTHENED AND MORE UNITED NDP, OR A COMBINATION OF BOTH. AS NOTED IN REFTELS, WHATEVER COURSE ORGANIZED LABOR CHOOSES, ITS RELATIONSHIP TO NDP IS BOUND TO CHANGE. MCDERMOTT IS THE LIKELY SUCCESSOR TO CLC PRESIDENT MORRIS IN 1978 AND IS COMMITTED TO A FAR GREATER LABOR ROLE IN CANADIAN POLITICS. MCDERMOTT'S INFLUENCE WITHIN CLC, RECENTLY STRENGTHENED WHEN HIS PROTEGE CLIFFORD PILKEY WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOR, AS WELL AS HIS INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF NDP AS ONE OF ITS ARDENT CHAMPIONS OVER THE YEARS, ASSURES HIM A MAJOR VOICE IN DETERMING WHICH POLITICAL STRATEGY LABOR WILL PURSUE IN THE FUTURE.
ENDERS

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